

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

On the surface, the role of the police is straightforward: maintain order and enforce the law. Doing so effectively requires a partnership between people and their police. To create such a partnership, the King County Sheriff's Office relies on Community Oriented Policing.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

Community Oriented Policing is based on the recognition of some basic principles:

- ♦ **Professional success requires partnership.** Just as health care relies on the partnership between you and your doctor, law enforcement needs cooperation between you, your community and the police.
- ♦ **Partnerships require understanding.** The police must learn the community's problems, its point of view, its desires. The community must get to know the police - what they can do, how to work with them and how to talk to them.
- ♦ **A partnership must be ongoing.** If these things can be achieved, the community will see its needs met and feel safer. As a result, more people will report problems, work with the police to solve them, and the process will repeat.

That, in a nutshell, is Community Oriented Policing. It recognizes the need for understanding on both sides, and for a partnership to make it work.

OUR APPROACH

Education is another important aspect of success. We want to involve the public in our business, meet you, explain what we do and why we do it, and ask for your opinions. Our training involves considerable education about cultural differences, the need for respect, and developing an appreciation of our role as helpers, not just patrollers. For citizens, education means learning how and why the police work, knowing your officers, and speaking up about the problems in your community.

YOUR ROLE

Citizens can do four things to prevent crime and improve the quality of life in your neighborhood.

- 1 Be alert to suspicious activity, and call police immediately if you think a crime has happened or is about to take place. If you don't call, the police cannot respond.
- 2 Work with your local King County Sheriff's Office precinct or storefront, or your local police. You can provide useful information for preventing crime and crime-related problems.
- 3 Support efforts in your community to solve problems and attack the root causes of crime. Get involved with a Block Watch, neighborhood beautification project, or business watch.
- 4 Adopt the crime prevention philosophies and techniques in this handbook. Criminals look for easy targets; protect your home and your personal surroundings, and you will discourage crime.

BLOCK WATCH: A KEY TO COMMUNITY CRIME PREVENTION

Block Watches are programs in which neighbors watch each other's property. Whenever you are home, you should be alert to what's going on in your neighborhood. A police officer may not recognize strangers in your neighborhood, but you and your neighbors will. You can then call police if the person is acting suspiciously.

How does it work?

The program works through cooperation: neighbors watching out for neighbors. Neighbors know who you are and what car you drive. They may be the first to notice a burglar at your door or window.

Block Watches are not intended to be a substitute for police; they should not become patrols or vigilante groups. You are asked to report situations to police and let them handle it.

How do I start a Block Watch?

First, call the crime prevention unit at your local KCSO precinct or police department. You can set a date and time for a meeting and arrange for an officer to attend.

Second, personally invite your neighbors and friends to attend. You can hold the meeting at your home, a club, a library, or even the precinct or police station.

Finally, stay committed by holding frequent meetings with your Block Watch members and staying alert in your neighborhood.

What do I watch for?

Strange vehicles, suspicious persons, and people removing valuables from homes or vehicles are good indicators that something may be wrong. Also, listen for the sound of breaking windows or wood, or screams that indicate fear. Watch for people going door to door or driving around the neighborhood. Finally, watch for people being forced into cars, anyone shining a flashlight into a home, or people loitering.

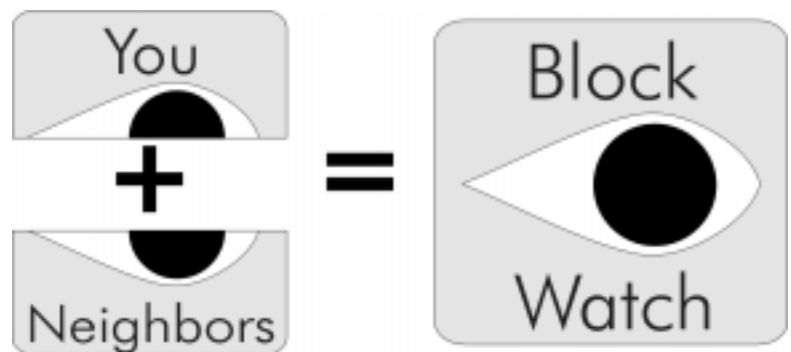
If you see something suspicious, write down a description of the person and their vehicle (including make, model, color, and license number). Then call police (911) immediately. On the next page, you can find instructions for reporting a crime.

What else can I do?

Exchange work and vacation schedules with a neighbor you can trust so you can keep an eye on each other's homes. Neighbors should also be able to contact you; be sure to give them home, work, and cellular phone numbers. If you know that your neighbor is away and you see an obvious invitation to a burglar, correct it. Close the open garage door and remove the newspapers from the doorstep. Collect their mail.

It takes effort to become acquainted with your neighbors and build the trust needed for a good Block Watch. The result is worth the effort.

**Reducing crime
in our communities
requires citizen
involvement.**



EMERGENCY!

**If a crime is happening or
someone's life or
property is in danger,
call 911.**

CRIME STOPPERS

The Crime Stoppers program is one of the most successful examples of community policing in Washington. The program allows citizens who have information about a crime to anonymously call and provide police with information. If the information leads to an arrest and charge, the local Crime Stoppers program will pay up to \$1,000 to the citizen who provided the information. In King County call (206) 343-2020.

VANDALISM

Statistics have shown that crime rates rise significantly in neighborhoods where windows are broken, sidewalks and vacant buildings are littered with garbage, and graffiti is allowed to stay on buildings and walkways.

When you and your neighbors ignore vandalism, you send out a clear message that you don't care about the neighborhood. One broken window or a wall covered with graffiti will lead to similar acts of vandalism.

Fighting vandalism is one job that neighborhood residents can do more effectively than anyone else. Few police departments have the resources to track down those who illegally dump trash or deface communities. Neighbors can immediately spot and eliminate vandalism and graffiti through neighborhood cleanup projects.

How to stop vandalism

To stop vandalism from evolving into an even more serious problem, you and your neighbors must be willing to do something about it. In many neighborhoods, acts of vandalism may be isolated events. Nevertheless, if they are left unattended, they may become a major concern for your community.

Once you and your neighbors are aware of acts of vandalism, you can be on the lookout and use Block Watch techniques (page 5) to foil potential vandals. When neighbors act as the "eyes on the street" they notice suspicious activity and report it to the police (911). If even a few criminals are caught in the act and reported to the police, the word will spread that your neighborhood is not a good place to commit a crime.

HOW TO REPORT A CRIME

Law enforcement needs your help in reporting crimes. Be alert wherever you are and learn to recognize crime. When you see or hear something that might indicate that a criminal act is being committed, don't hesitate to call police (911).

When you are reporting a crime, stay calm and state the problem. Give the address where the emergency is occurring. Remember to give the full address and the nearest cross street.

It is important to be able to describe the offender to police after the offense happens. Police need to know the suspect's race, sex, age, height, weight, build, complexion, hair color, eye color, clothing, and identifying marks such as tattoos. Remember though, as important as this information is, don't risk your own safety to obtain it. If possible, keep the suspect from knowing that you have seen them.

When you call the police, let the dispatcher control the conversation. Answer all questions. If you wish to remain anonymous, give your name to the dispatcher and then request anonymity. The police will call you later if they need more information.

OPERATION IDENTIFICATION

Operation Identification is a part of the Block Watch program that is specifically designed to discourage theft and provide a means of easy identification if your property is stolen or lost. Through the program, you mark your property with your driver's license number or Washington State identification number and create an inventory.

Identifying your property serves many purposes. First, it may discourage thieves; marked property is hard to dispose of because it is easier to trace. Second, if property is stolen and recovered, proper identification makes it easier for police to return it to its rightful owner. Finally, having marked and inventoried property can ease the process of filing insurance claims after a loss.

How do I participate?

Check with your local KCSO precinct or storefront, or your local police department. They may have an engraver you can borrow. Hardware stores and many King County libraries also rent or loan engravers. The engraver marks wood, metal, and plastic.

Marked property helps prosecute criminals. Police can't file charges if they can't positively identify the property as belonging to someone else.

Your local crime prevention officer can give you inventory forms to record your marked property. Keep one copy for yourself in a safe place (e.g., a safe deposit box) and store a second copy with a friend or neighbor. Don't store the list on your computer; it may be stolen as well.

After you engrave your property and complete the inventory, the officer will give you "Operation ID" warning stickers to display on your home to deter thieves. If sixty percent of the homes in your Block Watch participate in the Operation Identification program, you may purchase the large "Block Watch" signs for your neighborhood.

If recovered property can't be traced to its owner, it is often destroyed or auctioned.

How do I mark my property?

You should mark all items of value with your driver's license number or the number on your Washington State identification card. Don't use your Social Security Number.

Mark your items near the serial number. Be sure to mark on the frame or another permanent part of the item. Do not mark a part that can be easily removed or replaced.

Here's how to mark items:

WA SMITH455CM DL (driver's license)

WA SMITH455CM ID (identification card)

What if I can't mark an item?

Some items, such as jewelry, cannot be marked because they are too small or marking would ruin the value. In such cases, photograph or videotape the items. Be sure to focus on identifiable points. Store the photos or tape in a safe place. Keep appraisals in a safe place as well.



Most pawnshops are required to check property for identification.